

§102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,993,369 to Sekita et al. Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits independent claims 1, 14, 20, 30, 31, 33 and 34 are patentably distinct from the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1 relates to a binding apparatus comprising a receiving device configured to receive a sheet from outside and convey the sheet, a sheet folding device configured to fold the sheet conveyed by the receiving device in two at a center portion thereof in a direction the sheet is conveyed so as to be a folded sheet and convey the folded sheet with the folded portion thereof being a leading edge of the folded sheet, a jogging device including a jogging table, configured to receive and jog the folded sheet, conveyed by the sheet folding device, one after another, so as to be stacked into a stack of folded sheets on the jogging table, a binding device configured to bind the stack of folded sheets stacked on the jogging table at an edge portion of the stack of folded sheets at the side where the folded portion of each folded sheet of the stack of folded sheets is located and a discharging device configured to discharge the bound stack of folded sheets.

Sekita et al., as understood by Applicant, relates to a finisher with multiple sheet folders. A stapler 500 is disposed on the downstream side of additional-work tray unit 400 for stapling (see column 5, lines 3 - 4). After jogging of a sheaf is completed in the additional-work tray unit 401; the sheaf is conveyed toward the stapler 500 for stapling (see column 17, line 24-29).

In contrast, as recited in independent claim 1, the folded sheets are conveyed by the

sheet folding device, one after another, so as to be stacked into a stack of folded sheets on the jogging table, and the binding device is configured to bind the stack of folded sheets stacked *on the jogging table.*

Accordingly, Applicant submits independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited art. Independent claims 30, 31, and 34 are believed to be patentably distinct from the cited art, for at least similar reasons.

Independent claim 20 relates to a sheet folding and jogging apparatus comprising a receiving device configured to receive a sheet from outside and convey the sheet, a sheet folding device configured to fold the sheet conveyed by the receiving device in two at a center portion thereof in a direction the sheet is conveyed so as to be a folded sheet and convey the folded sheet with the folded portion thereof being a leading edge of the folded sheet, a jogging device including a jogging table, configured to receive and jog the folded sheet, conveyed by the sheet folding device, one after another, so as to be stacked into a stack of folded sheets on the jogging table and a leading edge stopping device configured to stop the folded sheet at the leading edge so that the folded sheet is jogged with respect to the leading edge thereof.

In Sekita et al., as understood by Applicant, a z-folding sheet is discharged toward the additional-work tray unit 400 (see column 12, line 51-53). A leading end stopper 409a is disposed in the sheet discharging outlet 401a of the additional work tray 401 and effects the FD-alignment (e.g., the alignment along the conveying direction) of the sheet (see column 15, lines 20-23). More specifically, the trailing end of the sheet along the conveying direction from the additional-work tray 401 to the stapler 500 (corresponding to the leading end of the

sheet being discharged from the discharging roller 13) always contacts steadily to the plate 412 of the trailing end stopper 403, so that the sheet is repelled in the direction opposite the discharging direction and the leading end of the sheet along the conveying direction infallibly comes in contact with the leading end of stopper 409 and the alignment along the conveying direction is further ensured (see column 16, line 43-57). As understood by Applicant, in Sekita et al., the FD-alignment is effected by stopping the leading end of the sheet along the conveying direction. That is, the end of the sheet opposite to the folded (crease) section is stopped.

In contrast, as recited in independent claim 20, the folded sheets are conveyed with the folded portion thereof being a leading edge of the folded sheet and a leading edge stopping device is configured to stop the folded sheet at the leading edge so that the folded sheet is jogged with respect to the leading edge thereof.

Independent claim 33 is believed to be patentably distinct from the cited art for at least reasons similar to claim 20.

Independent claim 14 relates to a sheet folding apparatus, comprising a pair of sheet folding rollers and a pair of supplementary pressing rollers, wherein the pair of supplementary pressing rollers is arranged downstream of the pair of sheet folding rollers in a sheet conveyance direction and is angled relative to the pair of sheet folding rollers, and a distance between a nip portion of the pair of supplementary rollers and a nip portion of the pair of the sheet folding rollers at a position corresponding to a widthwise edge of the sheet, at a side of a widthwise direction where the pair of the supplementary rollers and the pair of sheet folding

rollers are farther separated from each other, is shorter than a length of the folded sheet in the sheet feeding direction, and wherein a portion of a sheet is pinched into the pair of sheet folding rollers so that the sheet is folded in two by the pair of sheet folding rollers, and then the folded sheet is pressed by the pair of supplementary pressing rollers, so that the folded portion of the folded sheet is firmly folded.

As understood by Applicant, in Sekita et al., three folding rollers (folding rollers 207, 208 and 209) are provided in the folding section (see column 7, line 65 - column 8, line 2).

In contrast, as recited in independent claim 14, a pair of sheet folding rollers and a pair of supplementary pressing rollers are provided. In addition, as also recited in claim 14, the pair of supplementary pressing rollers is arranged downstream of the pair of sheet folding rollers in a sheet conveyance direction and is angled relative to the pair of sheet folding rollers.

As understood by Applicant, such an angled arrangement between a pair of supplementary pressing rollers and a pair of sheet folding rollers is not disclosed in Sekita et al.

Accordingly, Applicant submits independent claim 14 is patentably distinct from the cited art.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this

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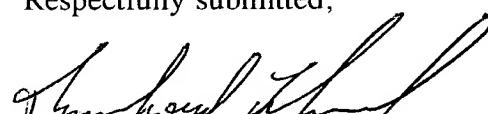
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paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Entry of this amendment and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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COPY SHOWING CHANGES BEING MADE TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 20, 29 and 33 as follows:

20. (Amended) A sheet folding and jogging apparatus, comprising:
a receiving device configured to receive a sheet from outside and convey the sheet;
a sheet folding device configured to fold the sheet conveyed by the receiving device in
two at a center portion thereof in a direction the sheet is conveyed so as to be a folded sheet
and convey the folded sheet with the folded portion thereof being a leading edge of the folded
sheet; [and]
a jogging device including a jogging table, configured to receive and jog the folded
sheet, conveyed by the sheet folding device, one after another, so as to be stacked into a stack
of folded sheets on the jogging table; and
a leading edge stopping device configured to stop the folded sheet at the leading edge
so that the folded sheet is jogged with respect to the leading edge thereof.

29. (Amended) The sheet folding and jogging apparatus of Claim 20,
wherein the [jogging device includes a] leading edge stopping device [configured to
stop] stops the folded sheet to be conveyed so that the folded sheet is jogged with respect to
the leading edge thereof relative to a binding device, and
wherein the leading edge stopping device include a leading edge binding position
adjusting device configured to change a position the leading edge stopping device stops the
folded sheet to be conveyed so that a position in the folded sheet relative to the leading edge

thereof where the binding device binds the folded sheet is changed.

33. (Amended) A sheet folding and jogging apparatus, comprising:
receiving means for receiving a sheet from outside and conveying the sheet;
folding means for folding the sheet conveyed by the receiving means in two at a center
portion thereof in a direction the sheet is conveyed so as to be a folded sheet, and conveying
the folded sheet with the folded portion thereof being a leading edge of the folded sheet; [and]
jogging means including a jogging table, for receiving and jogging the folded sheet,
conveyed by the folding means, one after another, so as to be stacked into a stack of folded
sheets on the jogging table; and
leading edge stopping means configured to stop the folded sheet at the leading edge so
that the folded sheet is jogged with respect to the leading edge thereof.